**Responsible for His People**

Based on [Mark 8:1-9](https://biblia.com/books/esv/Mk8.1-9)

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It’s a pretty straightforward miracle. Jesus multiplies seven loaves of bread and a few small fish to feed four thousand people. He does so because they were with him for three days and now they are out of food, and he had compassion on them. He feels responsible for them. His disciples don’t seem to think so, but he acts as though it’s his responsibility to feed them. And it is. Not that God has any duties, but it is God’s duty to provide daily bread to all people, and it is our duty to trust that he will do so. We are as his sheep, and he is our shepherd...and wherever we go in following him, we will not be put to shame.

Right now, masses of people are being led and confused about who they are to be following. We have been led our metaphorical “three days” in following the advice of governments and specialists in what to do in this pandemic. Wear a mask, don’t wear a mask, don’t criticize others for wearing a mask, criticize others who don’t wear a mask. What’s a person to do? Churches are being banned from worship in places, while other businesses that allow mass gatherings are approved.

And there is a cultural pandemic going on. Riots over racism and the historical sins of a nation are happening at the same time people are calling for the defunding of the police. And virtually all MLB players kneel during the American national anthem to show solidarity with the black lives matter movement, in a ball park filled with cardboard cutouts of people. And Dr. Fauci, the one who shepherds the people of the US with medical advice during the pandemic, throws the opening pitch.

I don’t know what each of you thinks of these things. I myself feel out of my element to rationalize what is going on in the world right now. It feels like we’re in the twilight zone, watching as the bizarre happenings keep happening around us...ominous things that...when you’re watching a movie you know are coming. And you think of the people in the movie...how can they not know, and why isn’t anybody doing anything about it? It is a strange feeling, watching the world go crazy and realizing you have no control or power or even voice to affect what’s going on. It seems like the world is being led out into the wilderness by the government and the media...that, they are acting as though they are responsible for us. But will they be able to take care of us when these metaphorical “three days” of teaching about pandemics and racism are over?

In these circumstances, we are not to panic or lose heart. This is not because the authorities of this world have our back or know what they're doing. They don’t. There is no worldly media or reporting that is infallible. There is no worldly authority or physician that we can trust. The only media that gives perfect reporting is the the Word of God. And the only authority that can be trusted is Jesus Christ.

We are followers of Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God, come down from heaven. He has humbled himself before the world and it’s authority, but he did not take a knee before the scribes and pharisees, who acted as though they were the sources of all knowledge and wisdom. He came down and told them that they were putting aside the word of God to preach and follow their own advice. And when he didn’t seem too concerned about hand washing, but instead healed on the sabbath...they took it personally, as though he was saying that their opinions were not as important as the command to love your neighbor, and be merciful, and judge not. And so they crucified him, but God honored him, raised him from the dead and lifted him higher than all earthly councils and authorities. And from the throne of the heavens, he takes responsibility for you, and for me, and even for the whole world...and is guiding all things according to the plan of his father, who will wrap up all history someday, maybe today, in one fell swoop. When people are marrying and given in marriage, eating and drinking he will come like a thief in the night, finding some drunk with the cares of the world, while others were watchful for his coming.

So it is of great comfort to know that, when a crowd of four thousand people left behind their earthly security in order to follow him for three days without provision, he didn’t simply turn them away. God does not forsake those who follow his word. And Jesus is the living word of God made flesh. He dwelt among us for three year, proclaiming the kingdom of God to give us the message of salvation in him, that keeps us safe through all pandemics, viral or cultural, and keep us in the true faith unto life everlasting.

And even now he dwells among us, as we gather together he personally feeds us the bread of life and the cup of salvation from the substance of his own flesh and blood. He prepared us for pandemics and rumors of wars to come, by telling us these things will happen. And though we become famished for righteousness, he will not let us starve. It is amazing that people are judging sinners and saints on whether or not they wear a facemask, or take a knee for the social cause de jure. Don’t listen to them. Don’t be like them. Don’t think that the sheep and the goats are to be divided by any such thing on earth. It’s not the powers and principalities of this age that will divide and conquer, it is Christ, who will divide his sheep from the world, keep them fed and satisfied with his righteousness, as he prepares to come conquer all other false idols of power.

It appears that there is not much righteousness here on earth. There’s a lot of speck shaming from those who themselves can’t see past the log in their own eyes. But the one who took seven loaves and a few fish and multiplied them into enough to feed thousands, he takes bread and wine and multiplies it into a feast of righteousness, enough to feed his flock until he comes again. Let us not lose hope, but press on for the day that he will set straight the insanity of this fallen world and take us to where he is.